



How to Pray for... **THE PERSECUTED CHURCH**



All around the world, we see the Church facing increasing suspicion, restrictions, and violence. Persecution ranges from harassment to beatings, imprisonment, forced marriage to unbelievers, loss of opportunities for education or employment, and even death. Perhaps most commonly, new believers face persecution from their own families, who see Christianity as a threat to their family values, religion, and/or reputation. In some places, persecution of the church comes at the hands of a more dominant religious group. Or persecution may come from a government that sees Christianity as a threat to their ability to control the population.

Persecution is real—it's painful and scary. It causes those who aren't strong in their faith to fall away and can be a huge discouragement to church leaders. It's hard for them to watch their congregations suffer and people leave. Many times it causes God's people to live in fear.

Yet God does not abandon His persecuted church. Many who've experienced persecution describe it as a time of incredible intimacy with God. And we've seen that when churches reach out in obedience to love their enemies, God uses it powerfully for His glory.



Please pray with us...

- For those under persecution to know the presence and love of God in the midst of their circumstances. Pray for them to withstand any accusation or action against them and to have “peace that passes understanding” (Philippians 4:7). Pray for boldness to stand in the truth of God’s goodness (Though He slay me, I will still hope in Him. Job 13:15) and to continue to share the gospel. Pray especially for new believers.
- For protection of families and churches that are under persecution. Pray for wisdom in how to provide refuge and safety, especially for the more vulnerable family members (children, pregnant mothers, those with disabilities, the sick, the elderly). Pray for safety when they gather together to worship and pray.
- For the Church to grow in loving its enemies—that they would know how to love their enemies well and wisely (Romans 12:20). Pray for them to boldly show love to their persecutors (Luke 6:27-28). Pray also that God would, in His mercy, use their loving actions to bring relief from persecution.
- For those who are persecuting Christians—that God would reveal His love and forgiveness to them. Pray that they would come to know the one true God.

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:8-18



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